

notebook

BY MARY-FRANCES DALY

Boogie Babes at Sova Espresso

Grab your little one and boogie on down to Sova Espresso to see Mr. Don, Mr. Skip and Oh Susannah! this month. The Boogie Babes show schedule for October is as follows: Oct. 15, Groovy Nate; Oct. 19, Mr. Skip; Oct. 30, Oh Susannah! All shows start at 10:30 a.m. Sova Espresso is located at 1359 H St. NE. \$5/child (cash only, pay at the door). Check website for updates: www.boogiebabes.com.

Halloween Haunt at the Farm

Bring the whole family and join your LeDroit Park, Shaw, Eckington, Bloomingdale and Howard neighbors for some Halloween fun Oct. 31, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., at Common Good City Farm pumpkin patch! Enjoy pumpkin picking, pumpkin painting, cider tasting, apple treats and of course, a costume contest. This event is free, but please consider donating to help make this event a success. Third and V streets NW. 202-330-5945, www.commongoodcityfarm.org.

Catch Singing Crickets at GALA Theatre

Cri-Cri: El Grillito Cantor, "The Singing Cricket," will be at the GALA Theatre Oct. 10, 17 and 24, at 3 p.m. Cri-Cri brings new songs and characters that will have children jumping on stage to interact with the artists, and parents will enjoy the songs of their childhood. Call for pricing. 3333 14th St. NW. 202-234-7174, www.galatheatre.org.

Exceptional Schools Fair at AU

On Oct. 18, join the Exceptional Schools Groups for a School Fair showcasing private and non-public schools for students with learning differences. It will be held from 2 to 5 p.m. in the



Kids get into the groove at a September Boogie Babes event at Sova Espresso.

Katzen Center at American University. Free parking is available in the center. For more information, contact Bekah Atkinson at 301-592-0567, ext. 12, batkinson@thesienaschool.org; or Lois McCabe at 301-299-4602, lois@thedienschool.org.

Alice Deal Middle School Open House Dates

Alice Deal Middle School (3815 Fort Drive NW), the highest performing comprehensive middle school in Washington, DC, is holding the following open houses for prospective students enrolling in grades six, seven and eight for the 2010-2011 school year: Nov. 17, 9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.; Dec. 15, 9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.; and Jan. 9, 9 a.m.-noon. Deal offers fully modernized facilities, including a state-of-the-art gymnasium, auditorium and cafeteria; an intensive math program; French, Spanish and Chinese instruction; sports and extracurricular activities. Call 202-939-2010 or visit www.alicedeal.org for more information.

Second Annual Kids Euro Festival: No Passport Required

The Kids Euro Festival – a celebration of European arts and culture for kids – returns to Washington, DC, Oct. 15 to Nov. 10 with more than 150 free events in and around the city. The festival, designed for children ages 4-12, features talented European children's entertainers from almost every performance genre – opera for children, improvisational storytelling, puppetry, dance, and acrobatics, to name a few. Free public performances will take place at various venues, including the Kennedy Center, Shakespeare Theatre, Strathmore Mansion, Atlas Performing Arts Center, National Geographic, THEARC, Imagination Stage, Discovery Theatre, the Library of Congress, National Children's Museum, the National Gallery of Art, Washington Ballet, The Goethe-Institut, House of Sweden, The Austrian Forum and La Maison Française. Screenings of European children's films and reading workshops presenting favorite European children's stories will round out

a month of diverse and imaginative cultural journeys. Some performances require reservations, which can be made at the Kids Euro Festival website: www.kidseurofestival.org. Call for more information, 202-944-6558.

Boo At The Zoo

Don your costume and head over to Boo at the Zoo – the wildest trick-or-treat in town – Oct. 23-25, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tasty candy, delicious snack foods, and other special treats from more than 40 treat stations. Plus, enjoy animal encounters, keeper talks and festive decorations. Rain or shine. \$25/general; \$15/FONZ members. 3001 Connecticut Ave. NW. 202-633-4470, www.fonz.org.

Pumpkin Patch Fest

Boys Town of Washington, DC, presents its first annual Pumpkin Patch Fest on Oct. 24 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 4801 Sargent Road NE. There will be activities for kids, refreshments and, of course, pumpkins! For more information, call Melissa Williams at 202-832-7343.

HallowFest

Start your Halloween celebration at the US Botanic Garden's Conservatory East Gallery, Oct. 31, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Decorate a pumpkin, attend a monster meal cooking demonstration, or create a creepy craft. Costume parade at noon. Prizes will be given for best plant outfit and best costume. Free. 100 Maryland Ave. SW. 202-225-1116, www.usbg.gov.

A 'Not So Spooky' Halloween Show at Discovery Theater

Discovery Theater loves Halloween so much it's doing two shows in one! Go batty with the puppet play

“Why the Bat Flies at Night,” a creation tale from Africa. And come in costume to help tell the interactive story, “The Ghosties’ Happy Day.” Shows are for ages 2-7 and run Oct. 29 at 10:15 a.m.; Oct. 30 at 10:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.; and Oct. 31 at noon with a family special – face painting at 11 a.m., and treats for the children. Ripley Center. www.discoverytheater.org.

Fort Dupont Ice Arena Halloween Spooktacular

Head to Fort Dupont Ice Arena for spooky fun at this year’s Halloween Spooktacular public skate and costume contest, Oct. 31, 4:30-5:50 p.m. Prizes will be given for the best costumes, and FDIA is a safe place for children to trick or treat. For safety’s sake, children cannot wear anything that blocks their vision (no masks), and no costume can drag on the floor. \$4/children 12 and under; \$5/ages 13 and older; \$4/senior citizens 65 years and up; \$3/skate rental. 3779 Ely Place SE. 202-584-5007, www.fdia.org.

Higher Achievement Needs Tutors/Aides

Higher Achievement is a year-round academic enrichment program for middle school students whose mission is to develop skills, behaviors and attitudes in motivated and underserved children to improve their grades, test scores, attendance and opportunities – resulting in acceptance to college preparatory high schools. Both mentoring and study hall aide opportunities are available at five different locations in the DC Metro area—Capitol Hill, Petworth, Adams Morgan, Benning Road and Alexandria, Va. To sign up now, visit www.higherachievement.org and complete an application. Alternatively, you may call Matt Thornton at 202-375-7733 or e-mail volunteer@higherachievement.org

Have a listing for the Kids & Family Notebook? E-mail kidsnotebook@hill-rag.com by the 20th of the month prior to publication. Submissions may be edited. Publication not guaranteed. ★



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9 am - Noon | Saturday, January 9th, 2010

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Barnard Elementary

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ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY HEATHER SCHOELL



ABOVE: Students dance to music from around the globe.

LEFT: Barnard's entrance is open and uplifting.

RIGHT: Pre-k students' work is displayed.



Eleven years ago, a pint-sized woman by the name of Dr. Shirley Hopkinson took over the ailing Barnard Elementary School at 430 Decatur St. NW. As principal, she hired a much-needed school psychologist, Dr. Grace Reid, and they set to work. Today, the school occupies a new structure built in 2003, Hopkinson is the principal of the Lincoln Hill Cluster (Barnard Elementary, Powell Elementary and MacFarland Middle School), and Reid has moved up the ranks to campus leader. The two school matriarchs work in tandem. With one eye on the world and another on the future, Barnard is all about teaching the kids as they are.

Teaching to the Student

"We have high expectations of our students," said Reid. "There are no excuses for not learning."

Hopkinson added, "We use the [Lorraine] Monroe Doctrine ... the 'no excuses' doctrine of education. The student's background is extraneous variables. What they come from, we can't control. The school has control over teaching children, and that's what we will do," she said. "One pearl I remind my teachers of is, 'Commit to teaching the children we have, not the ones we'd like to have.'"

Barnard goes to fourth grade and offers both Head Start for 3- and 4-year-olds, as

well as preschool and pre-kindergarten. "I'm teaching them how to converse," said the librarian, Mr. Alpha Jalloh, of 3-year-old Head Start students. "We're using manipulatives, learning how to speak in conversation."

"We have a cadre of really committed teachers," said Reid. "There is low turnover, and a lot of nights, the custodians have to ask them to leave! Students are our focus – it's not just a cliché. That's who we're here for."

Readers are Leaders

Books are displayed on small tables everywhere you turn in this sizable building of 378 students. "Eleven years ago, Barnard was 11 percent proficient ... we needed to start a push for reading through interest," explained Hopkinson. "I cut out morning recess – turned that period of 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. into Morning Reading Assembly," she said. "The first two years I brought in hundreds of books. ... The third year we started transitioning books into homes. The mobile library has come out of that. It sends the message that we value reading as a life skill." Now Barnard has a partnership with Verizon, which provides at least 900 books per year.

"Morning Assembly," explained parent volunteer Marlece Turner, "is that every morning the kids meet in the gym for exercise and the school pledge. Then they get a book

while the teachers meet collaboratively." Turner chose Barnard for her son Ellington. "The friendly atmosphere, the teachers – everybody ... it's the best-kept secret," she said. "Dr. Reid will tell you, 'It's all about the children.' She always has time for them."

Barnard has tested in the DC CAS at 66 percent proficient for reading and 56 percent for math for both

2007 and 2008. In 2009, scores jumped to 85 percent and 80 percent respectively. “We are a school of choice, a receiving school,” said Hopkinson. “Forty-five percent of our students are out-of-bounds.”

“Barnard gave my kids a start to be where they are now,” said Noel Blanchard, father of a college student and a high school senior, and a long-time Barnard volunteer. “That’s why I do everything I can to help out.”

Autism Speaks Here

Barnard seems to have found a niche among schools by offering an integrated autistic program. “The program is now in its sixth year,” said Hopkinson, who wears an Autism Speaks lapel pin. “Anne Gay, who was the assistant superintendent for special education, asked us to start this program. We pledged the space, and the central office pledged the materials for the program.” The program began, but the materials hadn’t been delivered, but they made it work that first year. Six years later, they have a waiting list.

The program, able to accept about seven new students per year, is for identified autistic children from preschool to fifth grade, with a ratio of one teacher and two aides to six students, with some students having dedicated aides. “We have the best batch of teachers, Hopkinson said. “We’ve made a difference in the lives of 21 students a year.”

Not unlike Barnard’s approach to teaching English Language Learners (ELL, formerly known as ESL) and special education students, “The students are mainstreamed wherever possible,” Hopkinson explained. “People come into the school and ask, ‘Where are the autistic kids?’ We do not make a distinction – they do music, library, art and P.E. with the rest of the kids. I have a faith about children – if you have your faculties – if you do not have brain damage but can wake up in the morning and have all your faculties, you can learn.”

“At a recent parent meeting, one mother gave a tearful account of how she had been told her child would never speak, but the teachers at Barnard had believed in him, worked really hard with him and he is now talking,” said Chancellor Michelle Rhee. “Stories like this highlight the dedicated staff, the high expectations, and all the work teachers and staff do with students every day. Parents can expect to find differentiated instruction both individually and in small groups, along with many opportunities for inclusion to ensure strong growth both academically and socially.”

Little Lessons, Big Impacts

Two things at Barnard stand out as being small lessons with the potential for reworking the fabric of the community. The first is the formerly wasted space that, with the help of Project Learning Tree, has become Barnard’s herb gardens, growing culinary plants to flavor the meals of the Armed Forces

Retirement Home.

Another impactful lesson, which Barnard is just getting off the ground, is an exciting adventure in entrepreneurship called Micro Society. Students of all ages – lessons are tailored to learning level – will learn to create business plans, about bank lending, taxes and wages. There are components of economics, technology, citizenship and humanities. “We want to teach the children how to be producers, not always consumers,” said Hopkinson. “To save their dollars instead of spending it all at the corner store.”



TOP TO BOTTOM: Librarian Mr. Alpha Jalloh with a Head Start student.

Dr. Grace Reid visits with students at recess.

Green space and a new playground.



A World Within

Poland, El Salvador, Ghana, Taiwan, Jamaica, Guiana, Senegal, Panama, Antigua, Peru, Nicaragua, Texas, Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania and DC – this is an incomplete list of the places where Barnard staff are from originally. “We celebrate the diversity of our staff – it is one part of our success,” said Reid. Teachers’ photographs are placed on a world map in the foyer, marking their origins, and a wall of flags in the gym represents the students’ origins. World culture is celebrated in reading books, in music class and incorporated into Barnard’s everyday activities.

Reid wishes to take Barnard’s globalization one step further, by using technology to give students ac-

cess to the world through distance learning. “We do not educate children for this neighborhood,” said Hopkinson, “we educate them for the world.”

To learn more about Barnard Elementary, call 202-576-1100 or visit www.barnardelementary.org.

Heather Schoell is a regular contributor to Capital Community News and can be reached at hschoell@verizon.net. ★





Neighborhood children receive basketball instruction during a block party Sept. 19 at the Turkey Thicket Recreation Center at 1100 Michigan Ave. NE. The John Thompson Foundation, which sponsored the event, centers its efforts on children whose health or educational opportunities may be at-risk.

John Thompson Foundation Focuses on Children

Kids Enjoy A Fund-raising Block Party At Turkey Thicket

By KELLEY DUPUIS

Children are what the John Thompson Foundation is all about, and about 100 kids attended a block party sponsored by the foundation Sept. 19 at the Turkey Thicket recreation Center, 1100 Michigan Ave. NE.

John Thompson III, currently coach of the Georgetown University Hoyas basketball team, started the foundation in 2007 as a nonprofit organization aimed at fostering and supporting other nonprofits that serve children and their families, its primary focus being education and health care.

Event spokesman Barry Florence said the foundation's special concern is at-risk children -- children whose

health might be in jeopardy due to lack of financial or other resources, or sometimes because of abuse.

This year the Thompson Foundation has partnered with the Washington Jesuit Academy, which provides education tuition-free to boys in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

"Basketball is the organization's lineage," said Florence, noting that the father of the organization's founder, John Thompson II, was a notable basketball coach at Georgetown before his son's tenure, and played in the NBA for the Boston Celtics with such stellar figures as Bill Russell. "But the idea behind the organization is that John wants to give something back to the community

he was raised in."

"Having grown up in Washington, D.C., the city has always held a special place in his heart," Florence continued. "He coached for a time at Princeton, and when he returned home, he decided he wanted to do something for the community and the foundation was started."

Beneficiaries of other foundation events in the community have included Capitol Breast Cancer, the Boys and Girls Clubs and other organizations, Florence said.

Radio personality Donnie Simpson and Ward 5 Councilmember Harry Thomas were among those on hand for the Sept. 19th event, which

centered around basketball instruction, but also included eye and hearing exams. Clowns were on hand, there was face-painting for the kids, and the Washington Jesuit Academy had an informational booth at the block party.

"They are trying to make this an annual event, which will also include a dinner for their partners," Florence said. "They pick a different partner organization each year. They'll pick a partner organization, have a dinner and then the next day have another block party. This year it was in Ward 5, and the hope is to do it each year in another ward."

For information on the foundation, go to jtiifoundation.org, or call. ★



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